



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries is Increasing Catch Limits for Black Sea Bass in the South Atlantic and Implementing an Annual Prohibition of Pot Gear

Small Entity Compliance Guide

NOAA Fisheries is increasing catch limits for black sea bass in the South Atlantic (effective September 23, 2013) and implementing an annual prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots from November 1 through April 30 (effective October 23, 2013). The actions are specified in the final rule for Regulatory Amendment 19 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 19).

Catch Limits

This rule increases the commercial and recreational annual catch limits as indicated in the table below.

Fishing Year ¹	Commercial annual catch limit ²	Recreational annual catch limit ²
2013-2014	780,020	1,033,980
2014-2015	780,020	1,033,980
2015-2016	780,020	1,033,980
2016-2017 ³	755,274	1,001,177

¹The fishing years are from June 1 through May 31.

²Values are in pounds whole weight.

³The annual catch limits for 2016-2017 will remain in place until modified.

According to a 2013 population assessment, the black sea bass population is not undergoing overfishing (fish being removed too quickly), is not overfished (too few fish in the population), and is rebuilt. The assessment results suggest the black sea bass catch levels may be increased without jeopardizing the health of the population.

Harvest Prohibition Using Pot Gear

This rule also prohibits the use of black sea bass pots annually from November 1 through April 30. The prohibition is a precautionary measure to prevent interactions between black sea bass pot gear and whales listed under the Endangered Species Act during large whale migrations and the right whale calving season off the southeastern coast.

More information, including Frequently Asked Questions for Regulatory Amendment 19, may be found online at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/reg_am19/index.html

Additional information on management of black sea bass in the South Atlantic may be found at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/bsb/index.html.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.